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ABSTRACT

A review of the operation of and prognosis for a program of higher education and counseling, in and out of the institution and additional follow-up support services in post-release period, for inmates of a maximum-security prison is given. (NF)

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NewGate

**NEW
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THROUGH
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NEWGATE: NEW HOPE THROUGH EDUCATION

"It is unreasonable to treat a man as an animal or automaton while he is serving his sentence, and then, at the finish of it, appeal to him as a human being to win his rightful place in society."

Winston Churchill

NewGate, it has often been said, is a "concept." Theoretically, perhaps. But to many men and women, it is also real, functioning programs working to motivate and aid offenders in their efforts to alter their lives. It offers post-secondary education, counseling, and follow-up services--options open to offenders only within the past decade.

Prisons originally were intended simply to isolate and punish, and if rehabilitation followed at all it was attributed to either or both. Not until almost the 19th century was even the most rudimentary form of education officially introduced into a U.S. prison. In 1798, the first prison school was established, but then only to provide the "three R's" as leisure-time occupation for inmates. Although a few institutions followed with similar programs, real change would not come for almost a century.

The starting point for this change was the American

Prison Association's endorsement, in 1870, of academic learning as one step in the path to reform. But again, sixty years would pass before the importance of education as an essential element in modern correctional treatment would be fully recognized.

A confluence of events occurred in the America of the 1930's that ushered in, along with the other great changes of the period, a change in approach to corrections. Not only had prison industries broken down, but new attitudes were developing with respect to education and offenders, fueled by the recommendations of sociologists, economists, and psychologists. Many offenders at the time had little or no formal education, and educational programs in the prisons proliferated. Across the nation, programs were established offering education through high school, including business courses and vocational training. For the most part, however, higher education was available only through correspondence--if at all.

During the next two decades high school programs flourished. Inmates were proving highly responsive and educable, and several received college degrees through correspondence. The first tentative experiments in counseling were attempted. Between 1962 and 1967, a smattering of pilot programs was initiated to test the feasibility of introducing college-level instruction into correctional institutions. The results were encouraging.

One such program, the Upward Bound Oregon Prison Project, established in 1967, sought to combine the best features of other programs with several innovations of its own. For the first time, inmates of a maximum-security prison were given the opportunity for higher education and counseling both in and out of the institution and additional follow-up support services in the post-release period. An evaluation of the program one year later stressed its potential worth, and in 1968, funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity, the Oregon program became Project NewGate.

Interest in the program grew rapidly. By 1971 additional NewGates had been federally funded in Colorado, Kentucky, Minnesota, New Mexico, and Pennsylvania. While academic offerings and counseling methods varied among the programs, all the NewGates offered essentially the same services.

Programs similar to NewGate were established in several other states and are still operating effectively. However, NewGate remains the only national post-secondary education program in the country. Its unity of purpose results in frequent exchange, coordination, and communication between program administrators and correctional and government personnel. Further, NewGate locates itself physically inside the institution with its own full-time staff, and operates as a residence program rather than an extension program. Its value, therefore, in terms of its

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working relationships with institution personnel, as well as with the students, is inestimable. Equally important are the benefits that may accrue to the institution by virtue of the professional status of NewGate personnel and their access to outside agencies and resources.

In the past, an inordinate proportion of offenders have come from economically and educationally deprived backgrounds. Now however, just as the nation's population has changed, so, too, has its prison population. Inmates are generally younger, more perceptive, and better educated than ever before; the number of prison inmates capable of doing college-level work is presently estimated at 20 to 25 per cent.

NewGate concerns itself with inmates who possess the capacity to do college work, and not merely with those who possess the credentials. This, plus the offender's desire to change his patterns of behavior, is the major consideration for acceptance into the program. As a result, the NewGate student body, insofar as possible, reflects the make-up of the total inmate population.

College preparatory courses enable students to enter the NewGate program who would otherwise have been inelligible. Others, often with feelings of inferiority or unworthiness, find their self-concepts changing along with their accomplishments as good grades appear and their enjoyment of learning grows.

Courses offered within the institution are designed to effect a smooth transition to college work after release; credits accumulated in freshman and sophomore courses may be easily transferred to the outside program. The NewGate student is required to maintain a grade point average acceptable to the college in which he is enrolled. Tutoring services often help to reverse a temporary setback.

However, since NewGate's main goal is rehabilitation or reintegration of the offender, no amount of education alone can insure this result. Only when his education includes knowledge of himself and the root causes of his difficulties can effective change be expected. To this end NewGate offers counseling programs geared to the needs of the individual. Intensive personal counseling and/or group counseling are provided to students both inside the institution and outside in the post-release phase.

Several NewGates are able to provide an education release housing facility for students on study release. Unquestionably, such a facility helps to minimize the problems of transition from the institution to the outside. Where such facilities are not available, NewGate personnel aid the released and paroled student in a variety of ways. They help him to find suitable housing, select educational programs, and prepare the necessary forms for financial assistance or admission to a college or university. When necessary, all NewGates offer some measure of gradually

diminishing financial aid to students continuing their education outside the institution.

Follow-up services are a crucial part of the total NewGate offering. The adjustment problems of an offender emerging from confinement are at once numerous and unique, and although counseling or therapy may have reduced them somewhat, many areas of his daily activity will remain difficult. The NewGate student continues to have access to NewGate staff and counselors. Program personnel work also with parole officers, vocational rehabilitation agencies, community service organizations, colleges and universities, veterans' organizations, and similar agencies. Every effort is made through this liaison to ease re-entry for the NewGate student. Even after graduation the ex-offender may utilize NewGate's services, for the program's commitment to its students includes job counseling and assistance in securing employment.

NewGate programs have been in existence for varying periods of time. For this reason, measures of success are proportionate to the total number of students who have completed the program. However, NewGate students are highly motivated and hence their achievement level is greater and their drop-out rate, both in the institution and in the outside community, is significantly lower than that of regular on-campus students. Moreover, their recidivism rate compared with national recidivism figures, is

dramatically lower--it is estimated at 15 to 20 per cent.

NewGate students have won art and poetry competitions, scholarships, and awards. They have received certification in business and technical fields, A.A. degrees, and B.A. or B.S. degrees. More than 50 per cent of the latter have continued their education with graduate studies. NewGate graduates have been able to enter professions previously inaccessible to them, and the effects of their achievements on public opinion and correctional education are enormous.

But what of the future for NewGate? The original programs were funded by O.E.O. as pilot projects. Now, having proved their viability and efficacy, they are moving from the research and development phase into the fully operational phase of their state or federal programs. Funding sources, too, are in the process of change.

In anticipation of this exigency, the NewGate Resource Center was established late in 1971 under the aegis of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) in Paramus, New Jersey. The Center's function is threefold: 1) the collection, analysis, and dissemination of statistical and other data and reports on NewGate and similar programs throughout the country; 2) the development of studies, manuals, and descriptive documents to inform and aid persons, institutions, and agencies interested in supporting or establishing programs like NewGate; and 3) on-site technical consultation and assistance including the

evaluation of existing programs, analysis of the needs of the institution in planning new programs, and direction and advice in the preparation of grant proposals. The NewGate Resource Center also offers help in identifying and developing potential funding sources.

NCCD's field staff in twenty-two state and regional offices across the country also disseminate information on NewGate in their respective areas, keep the NewGate Resource Center abreast of developments regarding educational programs in the states they serve, facilitate or convene meetings with correctional and educational personnel for NewGate planning sessions, and assist the NewGate Resource Center in supplying technical consultation upon request to states within their geographic areas.

Although the prognosis for NewGate is encouraging, funding remains the chief problem. Nonetheless, the growth of the NewGate concept is evident. By July 1972, another NewGate program had been established, approximately five states had written and/or submitted proposals, eight were in the process of doing so, and eighteen more had begun exploratory or preliminary work in the planning of programs that would incorporate the components of NewGate.

The NewGate experience has taught us a great deal. It has also reinforced something we have long suspected--that it is not enough to eject a man from a correctional institution with nothing more than a few dollars, a suit

of clothes, or even a degree. For unless something has happened to change him, the likelihood is that he will be back.

More than two million people are put into some type of confinement each year. At any given time, the number actually incarcerated is in excess of 300,000. Over 95 per cent of all those who serve a sentence will ultimately be released, and the national figures on recidivism range from an optimistic 40 per cent to 80 per cent. Further, the estimated annual cost of crime in America is over 5 billion dollars. Economists, however, supply a far different figure: when the costs of incarceration, the justice system, juvenile crime, organized crime, white collar crime, the destruction of property, and welfare to families of inmates are totaled, the sum is a gargantuan 60 billion dollars. And unless realistic solutions are applied to these grave problems, the price in hopelessness, disillusionment, despair, and rebellion may well exceed 60 billion.

NewGate is but one answer to these problems. Like any other endeavor, it cannot claim total success. But certainly it has changed the direction of the lives of many offenders. A "concept," yes. However, to the men and women who have worked within the program or observed it at firsthand, NewGate is growth, struggle, and hope.

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